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MORNING MEETING - 28 February 1979

The DCI was in the chair.

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1. I briefed on the [redacted] situation in Vietnam.

Richard Lehman
NIO/Warning

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MORNING MEETING - 26 February 1979

The DCI was in the chair.

1. I briefed at some length on the war in Indochina and on the Sino-Soviet frontier making the major point that the Chinese were not fighting well and were in a strong position vis-a-vis the Vietnamese.

2. I then mentioned three areas that I thought were of immediate concern.

- It was becoming increasingly clear that that Khomeini/Bazargan are unable to bring the situation under control and may well be overwhelmed by the left.
- In Lebanon the Christians are preparing for another round with the Syrians at a time when Arab defense force is melting away.
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3. The Director asked that OSR do a study of specific Soviet options for action along the Chinese border. He accepted my recommendation that alert memoranda be prepared on Iran and Lebanon and

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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20503

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National Intelligence Officers

26 February 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

VIA: Deputy Director for National Foreign Assessment
National Intelligence Officer for WarningFROM: Robert C. Ames
National Intelligence Officer for Near East and
South Asia

SUBJECT: Monthly Warning Assessment: Near East and South Asia 25X1

2. Lebanon - The Christian militias are stepping up training and rearming, [redacted] in anticipation of another confrontation with the Syrians. The Christian leadership remains adamant that the Syrians must leave Lebanon. The Syrians have recorded this build-up and are just as intransigent. Unless the Lebanese government is able to field a meaningful army to replace the Syrians at various "hot points" the renewed daily flare ups will, once again, break out into full-scale battles that will occur not only in Beirut, but also in North Lebanon, where the Syrians have strengthened their presence. [redacted] 25X1

→ 3. Morocco - Continued strikes staged by leftist controlled unions, coupled with a poor economic performance and an apparent no-win war in the Sahara. are a cause for the concern [redacted] 25X1

[redacted] To date no single issue has coalesced these factors into a crisis, but the longer they simmer, the more likely an issue, probably Sahara-related, will emerge. [redacted]

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4. Iran - Khomeini does not appear to be in full control in the highly radicalized environment in Iran. The strength of the left is growing and coalescing, while it must appear to them that Khomeini is indecisive and organizationally weak. It appears Khomeini will either have to negotiate with the left—thereby lending it legitimacy—or challenge it. Because he has no organized military or security force, a challenge could lead to all out civil war, which the left is better organized to handle. Unless Khomeini lets Bazargan start running the country and reorganizing the military quickly, the left will soon be in a position to call for inclusion in the government or a fight. 25X1 25X1

7. Iraq-Syria Rapprochement - The surprisingly rapid pace of cooperation between Iraq and Syria back in November and December waned considerably when the Egyptian-Israeli treaty negotiations stagnated. However, rapprochement could be given renewed impetus if an Egyptian-Israeli treaty is signed or if Iraq becomes even more concerned about the potential for instability from the Islamic Republic of Iran. 25X1

Robert C. Ames

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Several factors lead us to believe that renewed heavy fighting in Beirut between Christian militias and Syrian forces is likely during the next two months or so:

- Lebanon's basic problems remain unresolved, and there is no evidence that either the Syrians or the Christians are ready to make the concessions that would be necessary if renewed fighting is to be avoided.
- Warmer weather will remove a serious restraint on Christian leaders, who were reluctant to engage in major fighting while their followers—including numerous refugees—faced the rigors of winter.
- The mandate of the Syrian-dominated Arab Deterrent Force comes up for renewal on April 26. The period of the last renewal—in late October—was the last flashpoint for heavy fighting.
- Developments that led to the fighting six months ago are already being repeated:
 - Fighting in Beirut has gradually, but steadily, escalated over the past few weeks.
 - Christian leaders this week launched a propaganda campaign against renewal.

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Once fighting begins, there will be risks of added complications:

- Syria and Israel could be drawn into direct conflict
- The Syrian military will become more restless over suffering casualties in a situation it cannot fully control.
- Although it seems unlikely, Assad could decide to pull out—a move that would precipitate renewed civil war in Lebanon.

Christian militia provocations in southern Lebanon, together with Palestinian terrorist raids into Israel, also threaten to lead to wider conflict in the south.

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MORNING MEETING - 2 February 1979

25X1 1. The DCI chaired the meeting.

2. Iran: Khomeini is to have a press conference tomorrow morning at which he is expected to announce his Islamic council. There is some suggestion that Bakhtiar may resign and then head a caretaker government under the council, thus resolving the immediate impasse. Basically, however, nobody knows what Khomeini may do and if he remains totally intransigent, we will continue on the course to civil war.

3. Indochina:

25X1 We are beginning to be worried that the Chinese objective is not limited to winning a border flight, but rather may be Hanoi itself. With most of the Vietnamese army entangled in Kampuchea, the temptation must be high to "solve" the Vietnamese problem once and for all. The possibilities of miscalculation are very high, and we have to ask ourselves what the Soviets will do if the Chinese objective is as suggested. There is a ring of 1914 to all this, and Austria has marched on Serbia.

4. The Director asked for an assessment of likely Soviet reactions to such a scenario.

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Richard Lehman